Michael Westfall

AP Language 11

March 6, 2009

Class Rank

Jimmy runs home from school and opens the mail box. Today is the day the freshmen will receive his first report card from high school. Jimmy frantically rips open the envelope and starts to dissect the information he finds inside. While Jimmy can easily locate his averages and GPA, the young student cannot locate his class rank. Jimmy has worked hard and feels that he deserves to know how he ranks among his fellow students. The next day the freshman walks into the guidance office and asks why his class rank is not on his report card. Jimmy is informed that in an attempt to ease the stress of high school the guidance department, in conjunction with the school administration, has decided to forgo class rank. Jimmy is now perplexed; how will colleges be able to decide on Jimmy’s scholastic potential? What will happen to Jimmy’s drive to beat out his fellow students for top grades?

Many students are like Jimmy; their high schools have decided to remove class rank, a system in which school list students based on academic success. In fact, according to a recent study, 40 percent of high schools are no long reporting class rank to students and or colleges (Does class rank make the grade?). Fairview High School is one of these schools. Starting with the class of 2012, students will no longer receive class rank with their report cards. But why are schools removing this system? Many schools believe that class rank panelizes gifted students who are squeezed out of the top ten percent of their class and are thus over looked by elite colleges (Peterson). Also, schools claim that students tare themselves apart over their class rank. Schools believe that this system for ranking students is trivial and unneeded.

Class rank is determined in one of two ways: GPA or total percentage points. At Fairview High School students, excluding the class of 2012, are ranked on the percentage point system. This system is clearly explained in the Fairview High School Student Handbook:

In calculating the class rank, final average percentage points for all subjects

(except those graded as P/F) taken in **grade 9** **through grade 12** are added together to yield a total points score. Because Fairview High School has both "regular" and "weighted" courses, we recognize and give credit for "weighted" courses in the class rank. Regular courses’ percentage grade is multiplied by 1 (or .5 if the class is a 9-week course) (Fairview High School Student Handbook).

After this value is calculate for each student, student’s numbers are ranked against other students of the same class, and thus the class rank is created. The other method for ranking students, the GPA, system ranks students on their cumulative grade point average (Class Rank & College Admissions).

Many schools believe colleges do not take class rank into consideration, and this is true of some colleges, but not all. Many colleges do look at class rank (Finder). Thus, it is unfair to remove class rank from schools because if a student wishes to apply to a college that looks at class rank, then that student will have a lesser chance of getting into the college he or she wishes to attend. Also, many scholarships offering students large amounts of money to make colleges a reality are given out based on student’s class rank. If class rank is eliminated than students are unable to get this much needed financial aid.

Many students want to keep class rank because this it offers the students an extra incentive to earn high scores. Student, especially in the honors and advanced placement levels, like the class rank system because it creates a competitive atmosphere that drives the scholar to succeed. Competition is in the work force and on sports teams; it only makes sense to have competition in the class room. Class rank creates this vital and necessary competition.  
 Many schools claim that class rank creates an unnecessary stress on students. This is statement is fallacious because stress in high school already exists. It is impossible to avoid stress in today’s high schools. Class rank does not create any extra stress to student’s loads of worries.

In conclusion, class rank should not be thrown out just because some colleges do not look at the number, or because schools believe the system creates additional stress and pressure for students. If students do not wish to know their class rank, then students do not need to look at their spot. Students like Jimmy deserve to have the opportunity to know their class rank. Also, schools have a duty to their students to do everything in the establishment’s power to see that their pupils can get into the colleges of students’ dreams. This obligation includes producing a class rank.